L.V.A.U.G. NEWS

MEMBER OF NEAR US

JULY-AUGUST-1994 ISSUE #4

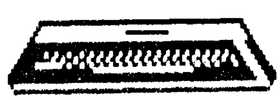
North East Atari Regional User Support Group.

An alliance of Atari User Groups predominately from the North Eastern area of the United States.
NEARUS was organized to provide a network of communications between people who would not ordinarily get together but have common problems and concerns. A BBS network is set up, and a common newsletter issued periodically is planned. This gives us a broad base of die hard Atari users sharing their problems, concerns, and knowledge.
User groups in Canada and as far away as Germany have shown an interest in NEARUS.

The following list of BBS's support Nearus, with more joining in the near future.

ABUG	Reading area	215-779-7859
ACUTE	Lehigh Valley Pa.	215-261-0670
Bit Byters	Germany %LIAUG	516-221-8462
Help Key	Allentown area	215-868-4856
JACG	New Jersey	201-298-0161
LIAUG	Long Island N.Y.	516-221-8462
NEAT	NorthEast Pa.	215-335-4805
Ol'Hackers	New York	516-221-8462
RACE	New York	516-221-8462
SAGE	Erie Pa.	814-833-4073
SJACE	New Jersey	609-931-3014
STARR	Connecticut	203-421-4861

Editors note: We made every effort to include all known supporting BBS's, if any were left out, it was not done intentionally. Any additions or corrections are most welcome and will be so recorded in the following newsletter.



ATARI 800XL

Meeting Notes
June 2,1994

Meeting called to order and opened i due form by President Art Paolini Jr.

Vice-President Jon Mordosky made the following report.
He reported that the Atari Navy has now increased to a total of five canoes, and that they had tested the new additions to the Navy on Monday on the Lehigh River and all conditions were go. Commodore stock is way down and they are considering taking bankruptcy unless they can find someone interested in purchasing the company. STs are releasing new items, Bob Brody is resigning,Jaguar has five new games being released. Nitendo is coming out with a 64 bit machine and new games in the future. New Lynxes can be bought for as low as 59.00, new games are selling for 40 and 50 bucks. Various companies are interested in producing games for both the Lynx and the Jaguar. New version of Star Raiders is coming out for the Lynx and the Jaguar. STs are going to CDRoms.

Art then reported he is going to find out about a German club which has a club disk (magazine) in English and see if we can make arrangements to purchase the English version for club use. Atari Classic has published its last copy, refunds may be forthcoming in the near future. New Atari Classic maybe published in California if enough interest is shown by 8-biters.

Rich Kohn made his Treasurer report and stated that the club still has a balance of $1000.00.Motion made and seconded for Art to try and purchase a 320XE for club use if he can get it for a reasonable price.Motion made and seconded for Art to purchase drive mechanisms for the club disk drives as the club is down to its last good disk drive.

The Editor asked Art if he had the newsletter for May-June and Art said he had never received it in the mail, so sorry no newsletter until we get the backup to Art.

Bob Werley had a demo on the ST, which involved a microphone being used and a mouse and the effect of the voice in the microphone could be seen on the screen.

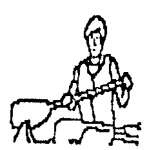
Since the editor had a stop to make on the way home he left the meeting and so this is the end of the meeting notes for the June meeting.

"the Editor"




THIS IS THE
COMPLETE
ATARI NAVY
CRUISING DOWN
THE LEHIGH RIVER
ON MEMORIAL DAY





WANT TO TAKE
A TRIP WITH
THE ATARI NAVY?
CALL
ACUTE 215-261-0620

BACK TO BASIC

What is BASIC?

It is a computer language. There are several computer languages and dialects but they all do the same thing. They tell the computer to do what you want it to do.

First let's meet the Atari: 8-bit computers.

NAME	SIZE(in Bytes of RAM)
400	16,384 or 16K
800	16,384 to 49,152 or 16K to 48K
600XL	16,384 to 65,536 or 16K to 64K
800XL	65,536 or 64K
130XE	132,000 or 128K

These are the most common of the 8 Bit line. Of course there are variations as to size and capabilities of each. More on this later.

To further explain, 1K= 1,024 bytes.

A byte is1 letter A to Z, 1 numer 0 to 9, or 1 punctuation mark. Note the numerals start at 0 and not at 1 as you are used to seeing. More on this later.

There are 2 types of memory. ROM and RAM. ROM is READ ONLY MEMORY. RAM is RANDOM ACCESS MEMORY. Information in ROM is permamently stored and cannot be changed. Information in RAM can be erased, changed, or replaced. Remember, when you type on the keyboard the information is stored in the RAM memory.

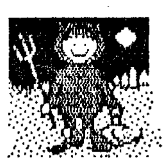
The keyboard on the computers are all quite similiar to a typewriter. The exceptions are the "Control" key and the Inverse key. The Inverse key is located at the lower right of the keyboard, and has either a half-shaded rectangle or the Atari "fuji" symbol.

Atari Basic is not built into the 400/800 computers or the 1200XL, you must plug in a Basic cartridge to use it in these three computers.

Basic is built into the XL-XE series, simply turn on the computer and you are in Basic. To disable Basic as required with some programs you must hold down the "Option" key when you "boot-up"(turn-on) the computer.

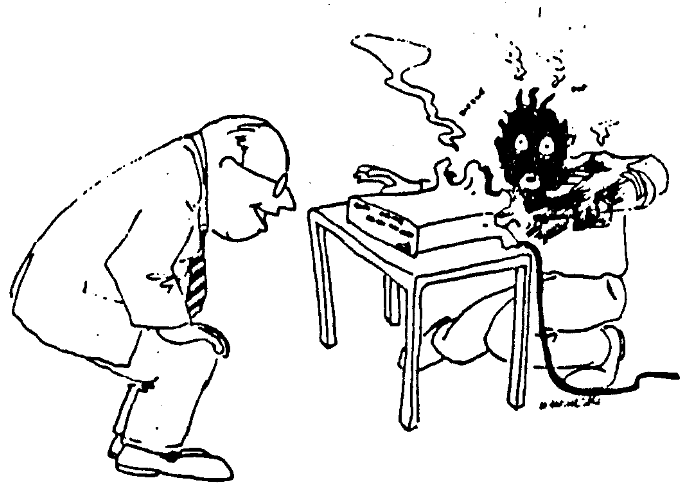
Now onto the actual hook up of the system. All peripherals are hooked up in a daisy chain. The computer is first in all cases, next you have either a cassette drive or a disk drive, and of course you need a monitor or TV to see what you are doing. (Note: some computers will not allow you to use a monitor but they all will allow you to use a TV set). You must also have a power supply for each of the above. Some equipment has the power supply built in(i.e. 410 cassette drive or your TV or monitor). The rest have an external power supply.

Look at the back or side of your computer to see the connection points. You should see a power plug, an I/O port, 2 or more joystick ports, and a TV or monitor port. With the computer and all peripherals turned off, hook them up as follows: plug the power supply into the computer, then the I/O cable (a wire with 2 flat plugs on it), then the monitor or TV cable. Next you plug the I/O cable into either the cassette drive or disk drive (whichever you have). You will generally see two I/O ports on the back of the cassette or disk drive. Use either one the second one goes to the next peripheral, namely your printer. Always remember the printer needs to be the last thing in the daisy chain. Now wasn't that easy??



Next time: how to use these fabulous tools.

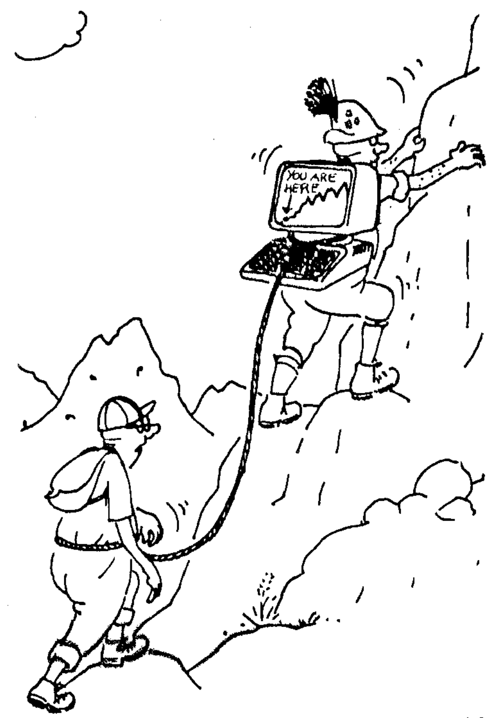
LVAUG Editor's notes: This article was reproduced from the November issue of (FR)ANTIC the official Alamo Area Atari User Association 8-bit user group newsletter for 1993. Most of our members probably think this is for beginners, well maybe but when I first started I wish that I would have had things explained to me the way this article does, sincerely hope that it may help some new members in the future and serve possibly as a refresher to some of the more experienced members.



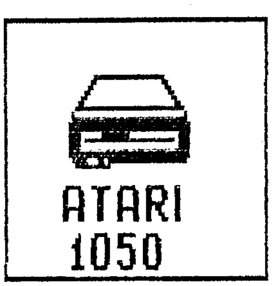
HEY, it worked! The lights quit flashing...



"Mr. Hoffmayer, the computer's getting sarcastic again."



Liebermann/Süddeutsche Zeitung/Munich



Opportunity is not a lengthy visitor.

POWER PROTECTION
By Sheldon Winick
(S.Winick)
(reprinted from)
(GENIE LAMP Vol. 4
Issue 65)

A POWER PRIMER

I know I've mentioned the need for quality surge and spike protection on previous occasions, but it seems no matter how often the subject comes up, there are still far too many computer users who have not heeded the warnings, and far too many systems still finding their way to our service department AFTER they have been damaged by an electrical malfunction that could have easily been protected against. In addition to basic surge and spike protection devices, there are a whole array of power protection and power correction devices which are available to fill varying needs and requirements.

A basic understanding of potential power problems is really necessary in order to understand how to protect your system from the possible damage that can be the direct result of such problems. Most everyone has heard the terms "surge" and "spike" as those are the ones most used to hype the commonly available protection devices. Even those terms can be confusing when applied to individual products, as the best selling surge and spike protection devices which are mass produced and mass-marketed frequently offer very little real surge or spike protection. At times when protection is really needed, those cheap devices frequently fail to provide the necessary protection.

Before we get into the specifics of the various types of power problems that can occur, we should first understand the types of damage that can result from bad or dirty power. In addition to the major hardware damage that most everyone is aware of, there are a plethora of more subtle inconveniences that can be a result of problems; things like keyboard lockups, corrupt files and lost data are really far more common than the major hardware damage caused by a major power surge or spike.

To better understand the causes of these problems, a basic understanding of the various electrical problems that can affect the operation of your computer system include the following types:
POWER FLUXUATIONS are normally slow variations in the line voltage which may be caused by dynamic loads on the line, from sources such as motor loads or appliances. Most power power supplies are designed to accommodate expected loads, but when fluxuations exceed the limits of the power supply tolerances, a sag (voltage too low) or a surge (voltage too high) may occur.
LINE TRANSIENTS are fast, temporary changes in the power line, typically measured in microseconds. A transient voltage drop is called a DIP or NOTCH; a transient voltage increase is called a SPIKE. Line Transients may be caused by electro magentice interference (EM), lightening or inductive kick-back from the turning on or off of a motor load on the system.
ELECTRO MAGNETICE INTERFERENCE (EM) are spurious signals caused by electromagnetic radiaton from devices such as overhead fluorescent lighting, applinces, radio of TV transmitters, electrical tools or machinery. The primary result of EM! is a disruption of useful signals, either on the power line itself or inside your computer. This disruption is commonly referred to as NOISE.

BROWNOUTS are voltage reductions typically caused by an intentional reduction in the line voltage by the power company to avoid an overload situation. A short-lived brownout can also be caused by switching on a powerful device that is connected to the same power line as your computer.

POWER FAILURES are a comple loss of power. Long power failures are obvious, but short failures are much more common and dangerous to the safety of your computer system and data. If power is interrupted for more that a few milliseconds, you computer system will be affected.

ELECTRO STATIC DISCHARGE(ESD) commonly called STATIC ELECTRICITY, is typically a build up energy in your body which is caused by movements in a dry environment. On a dry day, walking across a nylon rug can cause up to 20,000 volts of STATIC ELECTRICITY to build up in you body. Anything you touch will cause this energy to discharge(remember the last time you felt a 'shock' after touching that metal doorknob after walking across the carpet in the winter when the heat was on and the air very dry?) Touching an IC inside your computer without being properly protected from Electro Static Discharge (ESD) can cause any chips you touch to be damaged or destroyed. Even touching a key on the keyboard or the frame of your computer if your body has a build up of static electricity, can cause a disruption to the computer's operation.

WHAT SURGE PROTECTION TO BUY? A quality surge and spike protection device will protect your system from some of these potentially damaging power problems. But the key words here are "quality# and "some". The cheap, and more importantly cheaply-made, surge/spike protection devices will be virtually worthless when they are most needed. Several companies that make quality power protection devices offer a lifetime warranty on both their equipment as well as all your computer equipment that is plugged into their protection devices. You should consider these high quality protection devices the cheapest insurance you will ever buy for your computer system.

Another thing to look for in a surge/spike protection device is protection for your phone line. This is absolutely critical as even the smallest power disruption through the telephone's data lines can cause serious damage to both your modem and computer system.

Over the years, we have seen far more surge/spike damaged computers where the damaging overload entered the system through the phone line connection. If you think about it, the reason is logical. The power line comes into you computer through the power supply, which is not only designed to accommodate eledtrical power, but is also saftey fused. Of course, keep in mind that a normal fuse can not react fast enough to prevent a surge or spike from getting past the fuse and causing damage to the sytem. The phone line connection to the modem goes directly into the sensitive electronics of the system, carried from the modem directly into the serial ports and on to the mother board of your computer. These data lines are not designed to accomodate ANY electrical energies other than normal data tranmission.

OTHER ELECTRICAL NASTIES Now that we've covered surges and spikes, we need to look at the rest of the electrical malfunctions that may affect your system's performance. A study by AT&T's Bell Laboratories on the frequency of power disturbances concluded that overvoltages(surges) accounted for less than 1% of power problems. Spikes accounted for just over 7% of problems. Obviously, in spite of the need for quality

protection against surges and spikes ,the majority of power problems will not be addressed by a mere surge and spike protection device.

This same study concluded that Blackouts accounted for under 5% of power disturbances Sags accounted for 87% of problems. 87%! And sags are not addressed at all by a surge and spike protection device. What is most disturbing is that those sags may not even be very noticeable as they occur, but the results can be malfunctions in your computers operation.
, scrambled memory and lost data. A power problem that occurs during a floppy or hard drive write can cause that data to be corrupted as well as cause possible damage to the drive itself.
WHAT'S OUT THERE: There are a variety of power protection devices available to protect your system against power problem damage. Most can be divided up into the following categories:

Surge suppressors
Voltage regulators
AC filters
Uninterruptable Power Supply (UPS) systems

We've already discussed surge suppressors.

Voltage regulators are used to solve chronic high or low line voltage problems by regulating the incoming power and insuring that the power going out to your computer is exactly as required for proper operation. The problem is that voltage regulators can only regulate incoming power; they cannot make up for "missing" power.

AC filters are more specialized devices which can actually filter out undesired disturbance on the power line. Most of the better quality surge and spike protection devices also provide built-in EMI/EFI filters.

UPS systems, or battery-back-up systems, are designed to fill in and provide continuous power to your system when normal AC power is interrupted. UPS systems are available in a variety of types, from simple battery back-up varieties to intergrated "smart" UPS systems that incorporate surge/spikeprotection, voltage regulation and filtering. These top of the line "smart" devices can solve and protect against all power related problems. The better devices of this type also come with a manufacturer's lifetime warranty, covering both themselves as well as all the computer equipment you have connected. Again, this can easily be some of the cheapest insurance you can ever buy for your computer.

There is a cost of operation involved in UPS systems however, primarily due to the fact that the battery will wear out several years of operation. There is also the matter of selecting the correct size UPS for your system. If you add up VA requirements of your system(each piece of equipment will have these ratings attached on a plate or label) you will see what size UPS system will be needed. The amount of time you will want the UPS to be able to keep your system running will also affect the size.
WHAT TYPE OF POWER PROTECTION IS NECESSARY FOR YOUR PARTICULAR COMPUTER SYSTEM you will need to analyze your particular installation to determine the answer to that question. At the very least, every system must have a quality surge and spike protection device attached along with phone line protection. If your installation area suffers from periodic or chronic distrurbances in the power line, you will need additional protection. Discuss your system's needs with your favorite computer

dealer who is knowledgeable in power protection who can assist you in this decision.

In the long run, it'll be definitely cheaper to properly protect your system now instead of paying for expensive repairs later, let alone experience the inconvenience and aggrevation of interrupted operation and lost data. You've invested a lot of time and money into your computer system. Isn't it worth just a little more to properly protect it fromeasily avoidable operational interruptions and possible physical damage

Happy (Atari) Computing.

Sheldon Winick (GEnie Address:S.WINICK)
Computer STudio(Asheville, NC)

Sheldon owns and operates Computer STudio, a full-service Atari dealership in Asheville, North Carolina. Sheldon is also a registered architect(licensed in Florida, Tennessee, North Carolina and Colorado, as well as holding a National NCARB certificate). His current architectural drawings are, of course, prepared on his Atari TT030 CADD system, using DynaCADD software.

To get something done, it is only necessary to be half as busy today as you plan to be tomorrow.

NOT FOUND IN WEBSTER'S:
Digital Computer: Someone who counts on his fingers.

KINDNESS is a BOOMERANG.

BRAD: Boss, the computer's down again.
BOSS: What now!
BRAD: Someone dropped a rubber band into it and its' been making snap decisions.

Our duty is not to see through one another, but to see one another through.

THE FUTURE BELONGS TO THOSE WHO ARE WILLING TO WORK FOR IT.

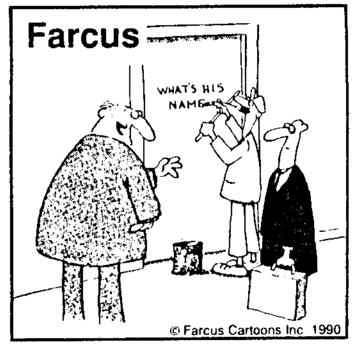
"JOIN"
THE
"ATARI NAVY"
SEE
THE
"LEHIGH RIVER"

ATARI ANNOUNCES TOLL-FREE CONSUMER SERVICE NUMBER

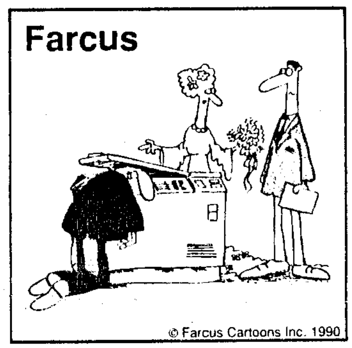
Atari corporation has decided with the release of the Jaguar, to offer a toll-free consumer service number. This new number is 1-800-GO ATARI. I am not sure at this time if they will be offering support for their line of computers, or, if this line is set up to handle only the Jaguar. Nevertheless, this is a good sign that Atari is making an effort to support their customers.

Some have said that they called this new number and have never been able to get through to talk to a live person. I can say from experience that I have called twice and had no problem getting through. Both times the person I talked to was very helpful and courteous. Lets hope this is just the beginning of a NEW kinder and gentler Atari.

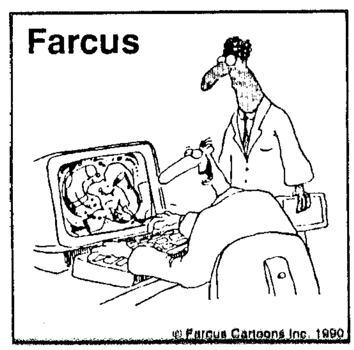
Also, Atari has opened a 900 line for people looking for game tips and hints. This number is 1-900-737-ATARI. However, this call will cost YOU $.95 per minute.



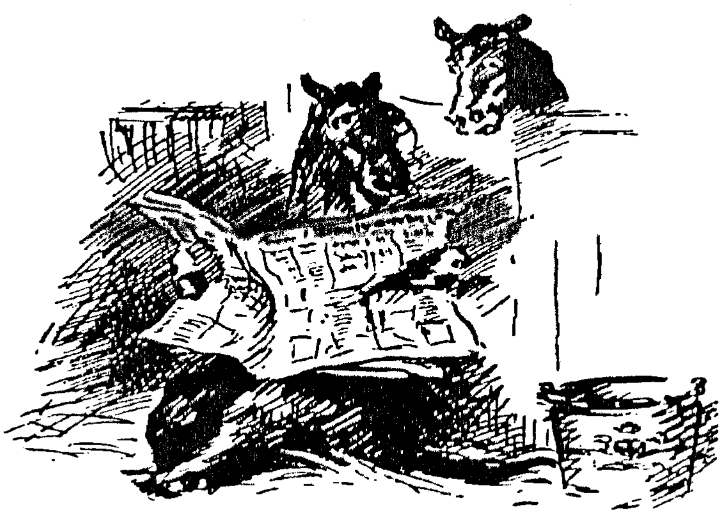
Nonsense. After 25 years you deserve it.



We couldn't afford a photographer.



It does multiple graphs and my shorts at the same time.



Hay!! Don't complain to me about a small newsletter. Stop 'Horsin' around and write an article

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LEHIGH VALLEY ATARI USERS GROUP
Meets the first Thursday of
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at 7:30 P.M. at the:
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